

As a licensed Amateur Radio operator since 1982, Computer Engineer and Physician, I want to add my name to the list of those in support of the FISTS CW Club's proposal (RM-10811). After 9/11, we now all look at emergency preparedness in a new light. As was demonstrated eloquently by the Amateur Radio communities who helped out with emergency communications in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania, we really need people with skills in ALL modes of Amateur Radio. Radio Amateurs have a long and proud history of service where it comes to emergency communications. But now in the post-9/11 world, this service is finally being recognized for what it really is – a vital part of our national security. In fact, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has recognized the importance of Amateur Radio's emergency communications capability by formalizing a relationship with the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) organization of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL). The DHS now actively promotes this relationship by funding emergency communications courses offered through the ARRL to *all* interested Amateur Radio operators.

In light of recent national events and that CW is arguably the most versatile and robust mode of operation yet devised, I feel it completely unwise to remove the minuscule Morse Code (Element I, 5 WPM) requirement. **CW requires the least power, bandwidth, and circuitry to function as (or even more efficiently than) Phone or digital modes for the passing emergency traffic.** Just as CW enthusiasts must have a basic familiarity with VHF/FM/repeater, phone, and digital modes of operation, it is only appropriate (and now more necessary than ever in light of the increased terrorist threat) that ALL Amateurs have at least some basic familiarity with the Morse Code. Certainly a 5 WPM requirement is at most a minuscule hurdle to surmount in exchange for the privileges of operating the ever increasing number of modes now available to licensed Radio Amateurs.

In light of the worsening terrorist threat to the United States and the increased likelihood of more such 9/11-type disasters, Morse Code should be promoted as *the* indispensable mode for use in emergency or post-terror situations. A completely appropriate way to promote Morse Code without hindering those who have interest in only other Amateur modes is to increase the requirement for the Amateur Extra Class license to 12 WPM as suggested by the FISTS proposal. There is too much at stake now. We live in a world that is more complex and volatile than ever. Let us not make the mistake of being too complacent and too ignorant like we were prior to 9/11. Keep the Element I, 5 WPM requirement and increase the Morse Code requirement for the Amateur Extra Class to 12 WPM.

-Philip J. Kroth, M.D., KA2QIK/7